

# Health and Human Development: Holiday Homework

*Due: Monday April 15th*

## CASE STUDY

### Fit dads mean healthy kids: study

*By Vikki Campion*

Dads have the power to influence the health and fitness of the whole family.

University of Newcastle academics have found children copy their father's diets and exercise regimes and will now trial a world-first study — Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids — funded by the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

The six-month study follows evidence that children mimic their fathers over their mothers when it comes to healthy eating and exercise.

Associate Professor Philip Morgan, who heads the new program, saw astounding results in a previous trial involving 165 overweight children.

He found children who lost the most weight had fathers who were engaged in the new eating and exercise plan.

In a separate trial involving 65 men in an online weight loss program, he found the children of men involved — and even their wives — also shed kilos.

'Mum can purchase and prepare the food but dads will often have less greens, or just meat and potato. The kids think "mum makes me eat this" and she is painted as the bad guy,' Professor Morgan said.

'Fathers influence the food and physical activity habits in the home through their behaviours, attitudes and approach to food and eating, and act as a role model to their children.'

Professor Morgan said mothers, as primary care givers, were easier to inform but when fathers make changes the whole family becomes healthier.

'We have seen striking results,' he said. 'These dads are still allowed to have a beer and enjoy things in moderation. It was subtle changes to their nutritional habits that made the difference. They see their lives change, they sleep better, and have much more fun together.'

Dad Steve Tingey said he hoped his two daughters Nikita, 2, and Caitlin, 4, would use him as a role model.

'I enjoy fatherhood very much; apart from my wife they are my two best friends. I hope they still use me as a guide as they grow up,' he said.

'We eat together, kick a soccer ball around together, play wrestle, tickle, and watch TV together. It's no surprise that they take that in.'



**FIGURE 3.4** Fathers are important role models for their children.

*Source: Courier-Mail, 18 August 2008.*

## Case study review

1.
  - a. Working from the article and your own knowledge, make a list of factors that influence overweight and obesity.
  - b. Classify these factors into one of the four categories of determinants of health and development.
2. Why do you think the influence of parents is an important determinant of health and development?
3. Which determinants do you think influenced the fathers to change their habits?

# Four determinants of health and development

1.
  - a. What are the four categories of determinants of health and development?
  - b. Give one example for each.
  
2.
  - a. Which group of determinants do you think would have the greatest impact on the health and development of:
    - i. a five-month-old baby in Sydney?
    - ii. a 16-year-old mother in Ethiopia?
    - iii. a 45-year-old unemployed person in Melbourne?
    - iv. a 70-year-old retired grandparent in remote Western Australia?

Justify your choices and discuss your responses
  
3.
  - a. Make a list of the determinants that have an impact on your health and development.
  - b. Rank them in order from 'most influential' to 'least influential'.
  
4. 'The social environment often leads to the health behaviours that people engage in'. Write a response (either agreeing or disagreeing) to this statement using examples to support your point of view.